



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# NEWS

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## **Blagojevich administration previews high tech device to be deployed in 2009 to keep impaired drivers off the roads**

***IDOT, ISP and the Illinois Secretary of State unveil Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device, to be required for first-time offenders, starting in January; Illinois to become one of two states mandating use by first-time offenders***

**SPRINGFIELD** – Traffic safety leaders from the Blagojevich administration and the Office of Secretary of State Jesse White today joined federal and local advocates in Springfield at a town hall meeting, designed to keep impaired drivers off the roads in Illinois. The highlight of the event was a preview of a high-tech tool that will be deployed in Illinois to curb impaired driving. Beginning in January 2009, first-time DUI offenders will be required to install a Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device (BAIID) in their car, in order to retain driving privileges.

“The state of Illinois is committed to keeping impaired drivers off our roads. Starting in January of next year, if you are arrested for impaired driving, you will not be allowed to get behind the wheel of a car unless you install a Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Device in your vehicle,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “With increased enforcement and the use of technology, we will make our roads safer.”

Illinois will be one of the first states in the country to require first-time DUI offenders to install a BAIID device on their vehicles. The legislation that created the new requirement was sponsored by Senator John Cullerton (D-Chicago) and Representatives Robert Molaro (D-Chicago) and John D’Amico (D-Chicago). The initiative was championed by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White.

“This is a new and innovative approach to dealing with a very serious traffic safety issue,” said Secretary of State Jesse White. “Statistics show that Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices are very effective in preventing subsequent DUI offenses. As Secretary of State, my office will continue to do everything within its power to make the roads of Illinois as safe as possible.”

Nearly every state has some type of BAIID law, with some states mandating use of the device and others leaving it to the discretion of a judge. Illinois joins New Mexico as the only other state mandating use by first-time offenders.

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“This is a measure that will save lives, by reducing the number of impaired drivers on Illinois roads,” said IDOT Secretary Milton R. Sees. “Illinois has made tremendous progress under the administration of Gov. Blagojevich in reducing the overall number of fatalities. However, impaired drivers are responsible for far too many crashes and fatalities. Studies show BAIID devices increase the level of accountability for a person who has proven themselves a dangerous threat to the safety of others.”

The Illinois town hall meeting was organized by the Illinois Department of Transportation’s Division of Traffic Safety in response to a nationwide request by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) for states to hold such meetings and to step up their efforts to combat impaired driving.

“The Illinois State Police have always been committed to keeping impaired drivers off our roads,” said ISP Director Larry Trent. “We support the use of technologies such as Breath Alcohol Ignition Interlock Devices in our fight to keep roadways safe. I am hopeful that the use of this technology, in addition to law enforcement’s efforts during the ‘You Drink, You Drive. You Lose.’ campaign during the July 4<sup>th</sup> Holiday period, will lead to a reduction in crashes and fatalities resulting from DUIs.”

“The BAIID program makes Illinois a national leader in the effort to eliminate drunk driving,” said Trisha Clegg, Affiliate Executive Director of MADD Illinois. “We know interlocks are up to 90 percent effective on reducing repeat offenses when installed on a vehicle, and we’re excited about the life-saving potential here in Illinois.”

The monitoring device would require the offender to pass a breath-alcohol test before the ignition engages. Additional tests would be required at random intervals after the car is started. The devices can be configured to perform a variety of functions if the test fails while driving (such as sounding the horn and blinking the lights), but will not shut the engine off.

If an offender is caught driving without a BAIID device or driving another person’s car, he or she could be charged with a Class 4 felony and faces a mandatory minimum of 30 days in jail.

The BAIID device keeps a record of each attempt to start the vehicle and the corresponding BAC level. These records will be monitored by the Secretary of State’s Office and the DUI offender will be subject to further penalties, if he or she continues to attempt driving under the influence.

As part of the town hall meeting, officials conducted a demonstration of how the technology works. This was done through a “wet lab” – a controlled environment in which a person consumes alcohol to a level of 0.08 BAC, which is the legal limit in Illinois. This allows law enforcement to observe of the real-life effect of impairment and the harsh effect of alcohol on a person’s motor skills. The volunteer participants will attempt to start a vehicle equipped with a BAIID device.

Throughout the past decade in Illinois, approximately 50,000 people every year have been arrested for driving impaired. Over that same time, more than 600 people died annually, in crashes involving a driver who had been drinking.

For more information about the Division of Traffic Safety’s impaired driving and safety campaigns, go to [www.dot.il.gov/safety.html](http://www.dot.il.gov/safety.html).